

There are 21 Asian Members. Before the Voting Rights Act became law, there were four. In 2022, there are 21. Before the Voting Rights Act, there were four Latino Members. In 2022, there are 52. The Voting Rights Act has afforded opportunities that were not there prior to Bloody Sunday.

There were six Black Members in 1965. In 2022, there are 61 Black Members. I am proud to be one of them—61. I would daresay that but for the Voting Rights Act of 1965, I would not be one of the 61. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 has made a difference in the complexion of Congress. There were thirteen women in 1965. In 2022 there are 151 women.

You see, Mr. Speaker, when the Voting Rights Act of 1965 made it possible for African Americans to have these opportunities, it did open the door for others as well. It opened the door for people of color. They were not the slaves that benefited from the 13th Amendment, but they were people who benefited from the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

It also provided people in my congressional district to have a ballot printed in more than one language. Houston is a polyglot city. Many languages are spoken. The ballot in the Ninth Congressional District, where I am fortunate enough to serve, is printed in four different languages: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese. The Voting Rights Act made that possible. It has been reauthorized and amended such that language has been made a part of the Voting Rights Act giving people the opportunity to simply vote in a language that they understand. Some people would say: Well, they should all speak English.

Well, there are some Native Alaskans who don't necessarily find English as their native tongue. They are citizens. They ought to be able to vote. They are people who acquired citizenship and speak another language. They speak English well enough to have the kinds of conversations that can help in your daily life, but when you are casting a vote for President of the United States or some other public office such as judgeships, it would serve people well to be able to do this with the language they are most comfortable with. Hence, we have the ballot in these four languages.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 has made, and continues to make, a difference notwithstanding the fact that a significant portion of it has been eviscerated. We still have section 2 of the Voting Rights Act to help prevent invidious discrimination that Texas is known for, by the way. Texas is the home of invidious discrimination. Texas has twice left its place in countries where slavery was not acceptable. Rather than remain, Texas has seceded. Texas left Mexico because of slavery, and Texas left the United States because of slavery. So the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has made a difference.

But the State of Texas through many of its agents, and especially those associated with the cult of Trump—formerly known as the GOP, the Grand Old Party—many of those agents would repeal the Voting Rights Act which would make a great difference in who speaks at this microphone and who walks the Halls of Congress.

It seems that in Texas if you can't conform with the law or you don't want to, then you just simply change the law.

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And that is what they seek to do now, to change the law, rather than allow the diversity to exist that we currently see. They would change the law and roll back the clock; and I assure you, the diversity that we currently experience would cease to exist.

So I am here to say that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 must be reauthorized. It must be.

I understand that the Supreme Court seems to be hostile to the rights of minorities, hostile to the rights of women. My dear friend, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, spoke quite eloquently on the subject.

I indicated that this was my last topic, as it relates to the cult in Texas, but I do have to confess that in Texas, the former GOP, now the cult of Trump, bans abortions, or would ban abortions—this is what they codified and published—would ban abortion from the moment of fertilization. That means that there would be no legal abortions in Texas from the moment of fertilization.

I do have sympathy for women who are raped. There would be no options, from the moment of fertilization. It appears, at least to some, that this would also mean, even if the mother's life is in question. This is as draconian as a law can be.

Women should have the right to choose. It is their body. I can have opinions, but they have to deal with the reality. And it is not an easy reality for many women to confront.

So this is something they should have the opportunity to talk about with their most trusted confidantes and make hard choices. I don't wish the choice upon anyone, but I do think that women ought to have that choice.

And my hope is that, as I indicated earlier, I live long enough to see a Supreme Court that will realize that *Roe v. Wade*—the decision in *Roe v. Wade* was a decision that gave women the opportunity to make choices that only they should have the opportunity to make.

Mr. Speaker, these are some very difficult times. I see many people celebrating. But I also know that when I called a friend to discuss this, there were many tears being shed. And not everybody is happy today. For many people, this is a very dark day in the life of our country.

Just yesterday, or the day before—the days run together sometimes when

you are up late—the Supreme Court ruled that you can carry your gun openly, notoriously.

I don't want to live in a world where my safety is dependent upon my having an automatic Kalashnikov model 47, or some replica of an AR-15. I don't want my safety to depend upon my being—having the quickest draw. I don't want to resolve my disputes with a gun.

I just think this is a very difficult time for us. And my prayer is that we will have persons in the Senate who will understand that there is little time left for us to make a difference.

We have the House, meaning Democrats. We have the Senate, and we have the Presidency. There is just little time left. But there is enough time left for us to make a difference if we choose to.

And my prayer is that those Senators will understand that either we take up our agenda now, or we risk not having the opportunity to take it up within the foreseeable future. That is what we risk.

I hope that they will see that now is the time to deal with a woman's right to choose. The legislation is there.

Now is the time to deal with gun safety laws that can prevent 18-year-olds from having weapons of war.

Now is the time to take up voting rights, so that all persons will have an equal opportunity to serve.

Now is the time to take up an agenda that will make America the beautiful a more beautiful America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE SERGEANT AT ARMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Sergeant at Arms of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE SERGEANT AT ARMS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 23, 2022.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, following consultation with the Office of Attending Physician, I write to provide you further notification that the public health emergency due to the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 remains in effect.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. WALKER,
Sergeant at Arms.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the extension, pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 8, and effective June 29, 2022, of the "covered period" designated on January 4, 2021.